



January 2008

Genoa National Fish Hatchery News and Notes

Jim Luoma joins staff at Genoa (WI) National Fish Hatchery

Jim Luoma has recently joined the staff at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery, filling the assistant project leader position. Jim comes to us from the U.S. Geological Survey's Upper Midwest Environmental Science Center, located in LaCrosse Wisconsin. Jim was the lead fish culturist for the LaCrosse lab, which is best known for its groundbreaking work in lampricides responsible for the recovery of many important fish species on the Great Lakes. It has also played a large role in efforts to register safe and effective therapeutants for the aquaculture industry through the Food and Drug Administration's Drug Approval Program.



Jim Luoma makes a great addition to the Genoa Staff

Because of the research needs of the facility, he has extensive knowledge of the culture and biology of over 15 species of fish, mussels, and amphibians. This will come in handy here at Genoa, where the station rears over 23 species of fish and mussels. Jim is also a prior U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employee, beginning his career as a biologist at the Service's Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery located in North Dakota. Jim, his wife, and

2 children reside in the LaCrosse Minnesota area.

- Doug Aloisi

STEP students spend winter break building mussel culture cages

The Student Temporary Employment Program is the Fish and Wildlife Service's way to introduce interested college students to careers in conservation. Genoa National Fish Hatchery has hired as many as two STEP workers for the last several years now. These students typically start work when their summer break begins and work all summer long. Because of this schedule, many people believe this program to be only a summer program, however, the STEP program is a one year appointment, which means a student can work throughout the year when available. Genoa's current STEP students, Brandon Keesler and Jorge Buening are making the most of this opportunity to earn a little extra cash. Keesler and Buening spent part of their winter break at the hatchery constructing mussel culture cages. Mussel culture cages are used to house fish that have been inoculated with the parasitic larval form of mussels called glochidia.



Mussel culture cages house inoculated fish during the transformation period.

The glochidia attach to the gills of fish where they undergo a metamorphosis. When the glochidia complete their metamorphosis, they drop off the fish and many will settle into the bottom of the cages where they will grow and then harvested for relocation to restoration areas. These cages have been used with great success for the past 7 years in the recovery efforts for the endangered Higgins eye pearly mussel producing over 30,000 2-4 year old mussels used in re-establishing 5 different recovery sites.



Brandon Kessler and Jorge Buening are STEP students from UW Stevens Point, WI

Some of the cages that Keesler and Buening worked on were older cages that needed to be recovered with hardware cloth. The success of the Higgins eye program has caught the attention of the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources. The WVDNR ask the hatchery to construct 35 cages for restoration efforts they plan to conduct on the Ohio River in the spring of 2008. New cages were constructed by hatchery staff, then Keesler and Buening riveted hardware cloth to all the cage frames. These cages will be shipped to West Virginia in early spring for their use during this years growing season.

- Tony Brady

Let's Go Outside

The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), under Director Hall's guidance, has started a campaign entitled "Let's Go Outside." During the week of December 3, 2007, FWS representatives from all across the country traveled to the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia for a conference, "Connecting People with Nature: Making It Happen in Your Community", in order to create a strategic plan to reconnect children and families with nature.



Local boy scouts groups are a great source of participants for your outreach activities.

The participants of this conference were nominated to serve as ambassadors at their field stations and in their local communities to work with children and families in developing strong conservation values. Participants attended concurrent sessions that discussed different strategies such as using nature classrooms, creating ambassador programs, and developing partnerships with the health industry. Motivational presentations were given by Director Hall, Dr. Mamie Parker, and Dudley Edmondson, author of *Black & Brown Faces in America's Wild Places*, to name a few. The conference ended with a Partners Exposition with interactive sessions and Regional meetings. As Fish and Wildlife Service employees, we can help

fulfill the Fish and Wildlife Service's mission of conserving our nation's resources for future generations by reminding the American people that conservation is an important part of our value system.



Ranger Rick adds entertainment to the meeting.

Possible strategies for doing this are creating a stronger volunteer program at our field stations, hosting festivals and events that are aimed at children and families, and by providing safe places for families to have unstructured play time. The benefits of connecting people with nature are many. The children will benefit by enhancing their observation skills, increasing their concentration, improving their fine motor skills, and becoming more physically active. For the big kids or adults, satisfaction will be taken in knowing that we are doing the "right" thing; raising healthier children (physically and mentally), but also knowing that the health of the earth will benefit by increasing the health of our children and the environment.

For additional information on "Let's go Outside" please visit the following website:

<http://www.fws.gov/children/>

- Darla Wenger

Coaster Brook Trout Eggs Arrive at Genoa National Fish Hatchery

The Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) received this year's allotment of coaster brook trout eggs throughout December and January from the Iron River NFH. Several spawns throughout the spawning season are taken to ensure genetic conservation of the brook trout strains perpetuated at the hatchery. The brook trout produced at Genoa NFH are part of an ongoing Great Lakes multi-agency restoration effort involving the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Park Service and the states of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan. The "coaster" strain of brook trout is endemic to the Great Lakes and other drainages along the Atlantic coast.



Coaster brook trout are raised at Genoa NFH. Photo by Jim Solberg

The species is threatened due to over fishing, competition with non-native species, and habitat loss throughout this range. Each year, the Genoa NFH distributes thousands of brook trout to restore populations in and around areas

such as Isle Royale National Park, MI and Grand Portage Indian Reservation, MN. Genoa's 2008 production is scheduled to include 40,000+ stockable fish ranging in size from 2" - 9", and two backup brood lines for the Iron River NFH.

- Nick Starzl

Kids heat up the ice for the Friends of the Mississippi Ice Fishing Day

Ninety two children ages 6-12 and their parents took to the Mississippi River backwater ice on January 26th at Goose Island County Park (Shelby, WI) to try their hand at one of the coolest winter sports around....literally! Participants braved the Wisconsin winter weather and got out of doors for at least half a day to learn how to safely and successfully participate in one of the northlands favorite winter past times.



Participants head out onto the ice for a day of fishing.

The participants were first introduced to an ice fishing safety session and then treated to a Vexilar fish finder demonstration by Scott Gartner, a representative of Bob's Bait and Tackle. Then the kids were turned loose to try their hand catching fish through the ice. Poles and rigs were made available and old ice fishing salts

from the Service and the Friends group helped the kids with fishing tips and tackle selection. After a couple of dozen panfish and bass were caught, everyone was brought back to the warming tent for a light lunch and hot drinks to warm their hands back up. This event is part of a Service's Children and Nature Initiative, to promote both structured and unstructured time in natural settings, to reconnect the Nation's youth back to the land and the natural resources the Service protects. The Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Fishery Services helped sponsor the event and its mission is to support responsible use of the Upper Mississippi River and conservation of the Upper Mississippi River as a true National treasure. It also functions as a support group for the 3 local U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries Program offices, the LaCrosse Fish Health Center, The LaCrosse National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, and the Genoa National Fish Hatchery. These 3 offices support fisheries restoration and conservation activities in the upper Mississippi River drainage and throughout the Nation.

- Doug Aloisi

Genoa National Fish Hatchery Partners with the USGS' Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center for Propagation Trials of the Imperiled Salamander Mussel (*Simpsonaias ambigua*) using juvenile Mudpuppies (*Necturus maculosus*).

Of the nearly 300 species of mussels known to have lived in

the United States, 18 are believed to be extinct, and 60 are currently listed as federally endangered or threatened.



Adult mudpuppy from USGS' Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center were used to propagate juvenile now at Genoa NFH.

The majority of losses in the U.S. mussel population have been through habitat destruction and, more recently, through invasive species. In some river systems more than 70% of native mussel species are being impacted or are in serious decline.

Genoa National Fish Hatchery has established a world class freshwater mussel propagation program that has produced over 8 million mussels consisting of 7 species, including the federally endangered Higgins eye pearl mussel and the winged mapleleaf.

The Genoa NFH has recently partnered with the United States Geological Survey's Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center to acquire nearly 150 captive produced juvenile mudpuppies to be used in propagation trials for the imperiled Salamander mussel (*Simpsonaias ambigua*).

Propagation techniques for the host species, mudpuppies, have been developed at the Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center. The Genoa National Fish Hatchery will utilize proven

Genoa National Fish Hatchery Accomplishment Reports

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technologies developed in its mussel propagation program to attempt to rear the salamander mussel with the juvenile mudpuppies serving as host species for the glochidia.

For additional information about any accomplishment report please contact Genoa National Fish Hatchery at 608-689-2605



Juvenile mudpuppies will be used in the April and May as host for the salamander mussel.

Partnering with the USGS's Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center the Genoa National Fish Hatchery can expand freshwater mussel production to include a new imperiled species using a captively reared disease free host species.

- James Luoma



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